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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS, NORTH KOREA

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage July 29 on former President Chen Shui-bian, who attended the last hearing for his money laundering and corruption trial Tuesday; on the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue; and on developments in cross-Straits relations. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an op-ed piece in the pro-unification "United Daily News" discussed the U.S.-China Strategic Dialogue in Washington D.C. and said the dialogue is not a zero-sum game and should not harm Taiwan's interests. A column in the conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" discussed Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's participation in the annual ASEAN ministerial meeting recently and said the United States is now poised to further deepen its involvement in the Southeast Asian region. With regard to North Korea, a column in the KMT-leaning "China Times" said Pyongyang has made it clear that it wants bilateral talks with the United States, not the Six-Party talks any more. End summary.

¶2. U.S.-China-Taiwan Relations

A) "Taiwan Should Pay Attention to, but Needs Not Be Startled by the U.S.-China [Strategic and Economic] Dialogue"

Assistant Professor Alexander Huang of Tamkang University's Graduate Institute of International Affairs and Strategic Studies opined in the pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] (7/29):

"... The first round of the U.S.-China 'Strategic and Economic Dialogue' covered issues such as the global financial crisis and economic recovery, climate change, energy, environmental protection, regional security and development. Though several observers have limited expectations [for the dialogue] as it covered too many issues which can hardly be resolved fundamentally in the short term, this dialogue remains significant and thus deserves [our] attention:

"First, the United States' strategy toward China has its continuity and has, to a certain extent, scored success. ... Second, China's rise in terms of its economic and military strength has grabbed [the United States'] attention. ... Third, the authority to steer the United States' relations with China is back in the hands of the State Department again. ... The fact that this year's dialogue has combined the previous two-track dialogue -- strategic dialogue and economic dialogue -- into one has more or less symbolized that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is now personally in charge of [the United States'] policy toward China.

"Fourth, the competition between Washington and Beijing is not a zero-sum game, which will unlikely endanger Taiwan's interests. ... Media reports said U.S. Pacific Command Commander Admiral Timothy Keating would be at the dialogue, but his presence is likely to be related to the recent confrontation between U.S. and Chinese battleships in the South China Sea and is thus unlikely to jeopardize [the United States'] arms sales policy to Taiwan. In addition, while Washington and Beijing are engaged in their strategic dialogue, it does not affect the timing and level of the

predetermined dialogue between Taiwan and the United States. By contrast, the systematic talks between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait should not be viewed as a zero-sum game either and will thus not endanger U.S. interests."

B) "U.S. Looks to Boost Southeast Asia Influence"

Columnist Frank Ching wrote in his column in the conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] (7/29):

"... During the Bush administration, Washington used to be quite relaxed about China making inroads in various parts of the world, including Southeast Asia, Africa and even Latin America, America's backyard. Not any more. In May, Mrs. Clinton, while meeting with foreign service officers at the State Department, said candidly that Iran and China had made 'quite disturbing' gains in Latin America. ... And so, the Obama administration has decided to compete for influence and attention around the world with other countries, particularly China. American efforts in Southeast Asia are particularly noteworthy. While Clinton was in Thailand, she signed the 1976 Treaty of Amity and cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), which the United States had in the past refused to sign. ...

"Accession to the treaty is a prerequisite to membership in the East Asian Summit. Thus, the United States is now poised to further deepen its involvement in the region by applying to join that body as well. China is known to be cool to the idea of American participation in the East Asian Summit. ... China has taken note of the renewed American interest in Southeast Asia. The official press agency, Xinhua, reported 'deepening U.S. engagement in the region after years of negligence' and termed U.S. accession to the amity treaty a 'widely-watched move that could have profound implications

for the future of Southeast Asia, as well as the Asia-Pacific region at large.' The game is on."

13. North Korea

"Pyongyang Makes it Clear That It Wants Bilateral Talks with Washington"

The "International Lookout" column in the KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 120,000] wrote (7/29):

"The spokesman for North Korea's Foreign Ministry said that the 'Six-Party talks' have become a venue that impedes [Pyongyang's] peaceful technological development and normal economic development, and that there are 'other formats of dialogue' to resolve the current situation. This statement revealed the same attitude as shown by [other] North Korean officials at international events. Those officials were more straightforward: '[we] are never against dialogue with the United States.' This clearly indicated that Pyongyang is determined to show its real face and talk with the United States. ...

"Pyongyang is aware that China and Russia are 'powerless' toward it, while Japan and South Korea can do nothing about it, either. There is really little value to talk with [these countries], whereas only bilateral talks with the United States might really achieve something. [Pyongyang's] hopes are to normalize its relations [with Washington] based on its own principles and ways, and the price Pyongyang is willing to pay will be 'non-proliferation' or further, to return to the 'Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty.' But it surely wants to retain its nuclear power. The Obama administration, without a doubt, will not agree to [Pyongyang's] ideas; it still wants to maintain the Six-Party talks and only agrees that bilateral talks [with Pyongyang] be conducted under such a framework. As a matter of fact, the United States' procrastination will certainly make North Korea more isolated, but it has also offered time for Pyongyang to develop more nuclear weapons."

WANG